How can we tackle child poverty in Northern Ireland

What can we do to tackle child poverty in Northern Ireland?

Viewpoint
Informing debate

November 2009

This *Viewpoint* explores the challenges facing the Northern Ireland Assembly in meeting its target of eradicating child poverty, particularly given the high proportion of children in persistent poverty and the nature of a society emerging from over 30 years of conflict.

Key points

- Persistent poverty in Northern Ireland (21 per cent before housing costs) is double that in Great Britain (9 per cent). More families there experience poverty at some point than in Britain.

- There are four main reasons for higher persistent poverty in Northern Ireland:
  - High levels of worklessness: 31 per cent of the working-age population is not in paid work, higher than any GB region and 6 per cent higher than the GB average.
  - High rates of disability and limiting long-term illness, especially mental ill-health.
  - Low wages: the median wage for men working full-time is 85 per cent of that for British men.
  - Poor-quality part-time jobs and obstacles to mothers working.

- The main barriers to working, especially for lone mothers, include:
  - No or low qualifications.
  - Disincentives in the benefit system to taking 'mini-jobs' (under 16 hours a week).
  - A serious lack of affordable childcare, particularly in poorer areas.

- Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged children and young people live in communities that face social exclusion and still experience violence that is the legacy of the conflict.

- Disadvantaged young people are at risk of being attracted to paramilitary groups if society does not address their social exclusion.

- In order to reduce child poverty in the region, the Northern Ireland Assembly needs to:
  - Work with employers to provide more well-paid, good quality jobs.
  - Support those in work to gain qualifications.
  - Consider increasing the threshold for earnings allowed within the benefit system for 'mini-jobs'.
  - Address the lack of good quality, affordable childcare.
  - Ensure school budgets can provide for all the costs of education.
  - Provide better access to leisure and social activities for young people in poverty.
  - Increase educational attainment for disengaged young people by providing more Alternative Education Programmes.

Authors
Goretti Horgan, University of Ulster, and Marina Monteith, Save the Children (Northern Ireland)

JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION

www.jrf.org.uk

Introduction

The view from within Northern Ireland (NI) has been that child poverty here is worse than in other parts of the UK. The Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey for Northern Ireland (PSE NI) found that, on a mixed measure of income and deprivation, 37.4 per cent of children in Northern Ireland were living in households experiencing poverty (Hillyard *et al.,* 2003). Households Below Average Income (HBAI) figures since then, however, have provided a different picture. They suggest that levels of poverty here are similar to, or lower than, the UK average. When we dig below the headline figures, child poverty in Northern Ireland is more entrenched and, while the analysis provided in the JRF reports on child poverty (see box) is useful in exploring the conundrum of what we can do to tackle child poverty in Northern Ireland, the particular circumstances of the region require particular attention. The evidence in this *Viewpoint* comes from government statistics and from the experiences of children and young people living in poverty in Northern Ireland[1].

Related research

In 2008, seven JRF reports and a summary Round-up reviewed what is needed to end child poverty in 2020.

Round-up:
What is needed to end child poverty in 2020? Donald Hirsch

Reports:
Can work eradicate child poverty? Dave Simmonds and Paul Bivand
Childcare and child poverty Jane Waldfogel and Alison Garnham
Ending severe child poverty Jason Strelitz
Addressing in-work poverty Peter Kenway
Tackling child poverty when parents cannot work Martin Evans and Lewis Williams
The effects of discrimination on families in the fight to end child poverty Matt Davies
Parental qualifications and child poverty in 2020 Andy Dickerson and Jo Lindley

How bad is child poverty in Northern Ireland?

The extent of child poverty in Northern Ireland (NI) is still emerging. Households Below Average Incomes (HBAI) figures for 2005/06 to 2007/08 show 26 per cent of children living in poverty after housing costs are deducted, which is 4 per cent below the UK average. Eight of the regions of Britain have a higher rate than NI and the other four have a similar rate. A comparison of NI child poverty rates based on net income *before* housing costs shows NI doing less well in comparison with other regions and 1 per cent higher than the UK average. Other data shows higher costs in NI for goods and services other than housing with, for example, higher proportions of children living in fuel poverty than anywhere else in the UK (Liddell, 2008). A recent report for OFMDFM (2008) highlighted the levels of fuel poverty faced by lone parents, revealing that lone parents on average spent 56 per cent of their income on fuel compared with 26 per cent in Britain (Hillyard and Patsios, 2009).

However, the first longitudinal analysis of four years of Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (NIHPS) figures found that 48 per cent of children in NI were living in poverty at some time over the four-year period (before housing costs) and 21 per cent were in poverty for either three or four of the years ('persistent poverty'). Thus, Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of children who were poor at some time over the four-year period (48 per cent in NI; 38 per cent in Britain) and higher levels of persistent child poverty, twice those of Britain (9 per cent). In effect, then, every other child in NI can expect to experience poverty at some time in their lives, while a fifth spends a significant part of their childhood in poverty (Monteith 2008a). These figures suggest that more families in the region experience transient poverty, or move in and out of poverty for a relatively short period, than is the norm in other parts of the UK. But there is also a larger core of families living in persistent poverty. Overall, this indicates that child poverty in Northern Ireland is more entrenched and is, therefore, likely to present greater challenges in tackling it.

The high rates of persistent poverty in NI are worrying since the effects of persistent poverty are so significant. A report for the Department of Work and Pensions found that children growing up in persistent poverty in Britain were at risk of a range of poor outcomes and these risks were considerably greater than the risk faced by children in temporarily poor families (Barnes *et al.*, 2008) Those outcomes included:

- going without regular physical exercise;
- being suspended or expelled from school;
- being in trouble with the police;
- living in bad housing;
- having poorer health;
- lacking a number of material deprivation items; and
- facing multiple (three or more) negative outcomes – 28 per cent compared with 18 per cent for temporarily poor children.

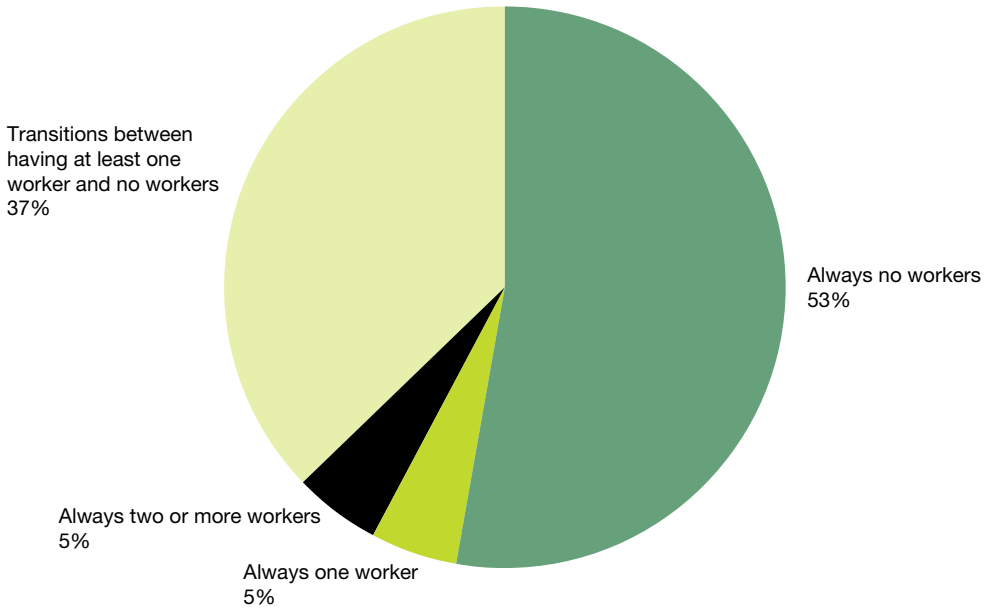
Northern Ireland has a much higher proportion of children living in persistent poverty and poverty is experienced at some point by a lot more families. The evidence suggests that this mix is due to:

- high levels of worklessness;
- the nature and pay levels of the jobs available; and
- the obstacles to employment faced by mothers, especially lone mothers.

Figure 1 shows that, as in Britain, most families in persistent poverty in Northern Ireland are continuously workless. Over half (53 per cent) did not have a worker in their family throughout the period. Kenway (2006) showed that 31 per cent of NI's working-age population is not in paid work, a higher proportion than any Great Britain (GB) region and 6 per cent higher than the GB average. Four-fifths of working-age people receiving a key out-of-work benefit for two years or more are sick and disabled. The proportion of lone parent families in NI (27 per cent in 2006) is greater than in Great Britain (24.5 per cent). Three out of four persistently poor children in NI either lived in one-parent families for all (56 per cent) or part (18 per cent) of the four-year period. Figure 2 shows the characteristics of persistently poor families.

In May 2008, 47,220 children, almost two-thirds of whom were under the age of ten, were living in lone-parent families claiming Income Support (Department of Social Development, 2009). A similar number of children were living in poverty in families where at least one adult is in work. Below, we will look at why this is the case and argue that research carried out for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (*What is needed to end child poverty in 2020?)* is keenly applicable to the development of a strategy to address child poverty in Northern Ireland.

Figure 1: Persistent child poverty and employment status of adults in household over time



Source: NIHPS 2001–4

In-work poverty

It is worth starting this discussion by looking at in-work poverty, since research indicates that parents, especially lone parents, make rational decisions about taking paid employment based on whether they can make sustainable arrangements for all their children to be cared for and whether it pays them to work outside the home. Thus, as well as wage levels, they have to take into account availability of different kinds of childcare – for pre-school, primary school-aged and older children – the cost of transport to and from work (including getting children to childcare or school) and whether the job will be flexible enough to allow time off to look after a sick child (Gray and Carragher, 2006; Millar, 2008; Yeandle, 2009). Being able to command a good wage makes providing care for children of all ages easier; having good qualifications makes it a lot easier to get a job that pays well and has family-friendly working conditions.

In JRF's *Addressing in-work poverty*, Kenway points out that, until the recession began, there had been a continuing fall in the number of children in poverty across the UK who belong to workless households, and a growing number of children who need tax credits to avoid in-work poverty. He concludes that the problem of work which does not provide sufficient income to keep a family out of poverty has worsened. There are a number of reasons for high levels of in-work poverty in Northern Ireland. These include wage levels that mean even working a 40-hour week will not produce a living wage; the geographical distribution of better paid work; the promotion of Northern Ireland as a low-wage economy; poor skills and qualifications; and part-time working, mainly to fit in with looking after children or other caring responsibilities.

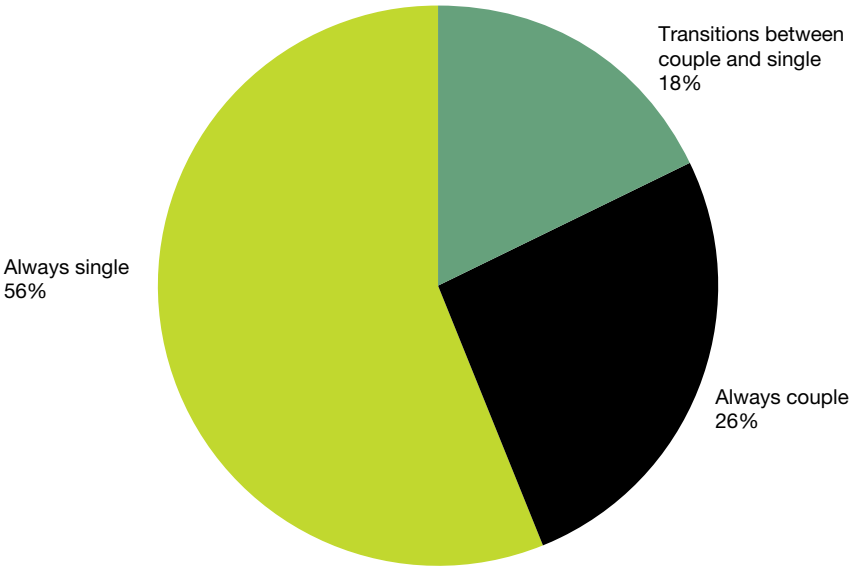
Avoiding in-work poverty in Northern Ireland is even more difficult than in England, Scotland or Wales. In 2007, the median male wage in Northern Ireland was £424.80 per week; this means that half of all men working full-time in NI earned less than this. This is just 85 per cent of the UK-wide male median figure of £498.30 and is over £15 a week less than the next lowest paid region of the UK, the North East of England.[2]

Northern Ireland is promoted as a low-wage economy. 'Invest Northern Ireland' is the agency that promotes inward investment in the region. On its website, it answers the question 'Why locate in Northern Ireland?' with the fact that costs are competitive and backs this with the following:

'Northern Ireland provides one of the most cost-efficient business environments in Europe.

- Salary costs are up to 30 per cent lower than other similar European locations.
- Labour costs are comparably lower than the rest of the UK and Europe.
- Property costs compare very favourably with other regions in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Prime office rents are among the lowest in the developed world.'[3]

Figure 2: Family structure for persistently poor children



While there was a marked increase in the number of available jobs between 1996 and 2006, most of that increase was in the service sector, so that in 2007 four out of every five jobs in Northern Ireland were in the service sector. Within the service sector the biggest growth areas have been wholesale, retail and health and social care – in predominantly low-value, low-wage and often part-time jobs. In the hotel and restaurant sectors, in wholesale and retail, a majority of workers earn less than £7 per hour. For example, in 2007, 75 per cent of hotel and restaurant workers earned less than £7 (DETINI, 2008). The www.poverty.org.uk website shows that 20 per cent of all full-time employees in NI in 2008 were paid less than £7 an hour, a far higher proportion than in any GB region. A quarter of these worked in the public sector.

Since 39 per cent of all female employees in Northern Ireland work part-time compared with just 7 per cent of male employees, the quality of part-time jobs available is important in tackling child poverty, as will become clear below. The service sector is the largest employer of women in Northern Ireland, accounting for 93 per cent (98 per cent for part-time workers) of female employees, compared with 63 per cent of male employees. Some 57 per cent of part-time working women are employed in the three lowest paid occupations (DETINI, 2008).

Kenway *et al.* (2006) points out that for a family to get out of and stay out of poverty, more than one person in the household needs to be in full-time and sustained employment. Unfortunately, in Northern Ireland the proportion of households where all adults are in paid employment is less than in any other part of the UK outside London (Bivand, 2005).

Kenway also indicates that, mainly for reasons related to the care of children, most of the children in in-work poverty belong to families who are only 'partly working'. 'Partly working' is defined as 'where the jobs done are part-time only, or where one adult is not working at all, or where at least one adult is self-employed'. The question, then, is whether it is possible to increase the number of families with children that are 'fully working' – that is, where at least one adult is working full-time and the second (if there is one) is working at least part-time? Even before the onset of recession, to achieve this goal would have needed an increase in the number of jobs available outside the Greater Belfast region, bringing into economic activity some of those who are currently inactive and, in particular, increasing the number of mothers in paid work.

Despite the recession, policy-makers need to address the question of Northern Ireland being promoted as a low-pay economy since comparative international research shows there is a clear link between levels of market wages (i.e. before tax credits and other transfers) and levels of child poverty (Bradbury and Jäntti, 1999; UNICEF, 2005; DeFina, 2008).

Mothers and paid employment

In Northern Ireland, as in the rest of the UK, women's economic activity rates are influenced by the number of children they have, the age of the children and the availability of affordable, quality childcare. Some 73 per cent of women with no children are in paid work compared with 64 per cent for women with two children. Women with children under ten years old are less likely to be in paid work than those with children in the 11–15 age group. Women who are lone parents are much less likely than women in two-parent families to work outside the home (DETINI, 2008).

The Simmonds and Bivand report for JRF (*Can work eradicate child poverty?*) is useful in looking at the issues surrounding mothers and paid employment in Northern Ireland. Their findings were particularly interesting in relation to:

- the links between qualification levels and mothers' paid work;
- parents seeking part-time work to fit in with childcare;
- part-time work under 16 hours a week, or 'mini-jobs'; and
- seasonal patterns in lone parents exiting work.

Working-age qualification levels

Simmonds and Bivand found that 'patterns of working among mothers are very strongly linked to qualifications and hence to the ability to command higher earnings.' This confirms findings of qualitative research in Northern Ireland where mothers indicated that the level of wages on offer at the lower end of the labour market was as much an obstacle to them taking paid work as was the lack of childcare (Gray and Carragher, 2006; Horgan, 2006).

In 2006 the current overall working-age population of Northern Ireland had a much higher proportion (24 per cent) of people with no qualifications than England (14 per cent) and Wales (17 per cent) (Northern Ireland Audit Office, 2006). Over 230,000 people of working age had no qualifications and almost half of these (110,760) were economically inactive, with a further 11,000 unemployed. Almost half (47 per cent) of all persistently poor children lived with parents who had no qualifications (of GCSE level or equivalent) (Monteith *et al.*, 2008b). Thus, well over half of those without qualifications are not in employment.

We do not have figures for qualification levels among lone parents. However, the New Deal for Lone Parents and similar initiatives do not support training above Level 2 NVQ, a level of qualification which does not enable progression beyond entry-level jobs. The economic return on such low-level qualifications is poor and unlikely to bring a lone parent's family out of poverty (McIntosh, 2004; Machin and McNally, 2006)

The proportion of those without qualifications increases with age, with twice as many of those over the age of 35 having no qualifications compared with those under 35. Some of this is likely to be part of the legacy of the Troubles, as is evident when educational qualification levels are examined in areas where the conflict was at its most intense; some of it is due to those with higher qualifications moving out of more deprived areas (Lupton, 2004; Horgan, 2007).

While there has been significant improvement in the proportion of people under the age of 35 who lack basic qualifications, there is still a problem in relation to young people, especially young men, concentrated in the most disadvantaged parts of the region, who do not have the basic qualifications needed to allow them to earn a decent living. We will return to this issue below.

Part-time work and 'mini-jobs'

The risk of in-work poverty is more than three times greater for those working less than 30 hours a week, compared with those working more than 30 hours a week (Eurostat, 2005). Yet, Simmonds and Bivand point out, nearly three out of four of those looking for part-time work are workless parents and the majority of parents who are looking for work are looking for part-time work. A quarter of a million jobs in NI are part-time, most of them held by women. Just 11 per cent of female workers working part-time told the Labour Force Survey (2008) they were working part-time because they could not find a full-time job, whereas 78 per cent said they did not want a full-time job. While the reasons for this are not explored in the Labour Force Survey, most of those saying they do not want a full-time job are likely to be mothers or have other caring responsibilities.

Simmonds and Bivand found that 'mini-jobs' (for less than 16 hours a week) are the main factor in the difference between employment rates for lone mothers and mothers in couples. Depending on the existing family income, mini-jobs can bring a family's income above the poverty line or at least can alleviate the worst effects of poverty on the family. They also mean that a mother maintains links with the world of paid employment, is less isolated socially and, while the quantitative evidence is not conclusive, qualitative evidence shows lone parents appreciate the possibility of returning to employment via jobs of shorter hours (Iacovou and Berthoud, 2000; Bell *et al.*, 2007; Hales *et al.*, 2007).

So, a mini-job generally has a positive impact. However, there is evidence that Housing Benefit rules are a disincentive to working in a mini-job for all mothers, lone or coupled, in private rented accommodation (Hales *et al.*, 2007). For a lone mother, unless she can work for over 16 hours a week and therefore qualify for tax credits, it makes no economic sense to work for anything more than about 3.5 hours a week, as the 'earnings disregard' (the threshold amount a claimant can earn before benefits are affected) is only £20 a week.

In the Republic of Ireland, despite cuts in welfare payments, the earnings disregard is considerably higher at 146 euro a week net (c. £136 sterling at current exchange rates, October 2009). There is then a tapering effect, so that a lone parent can earn up to 850 euro (c. £794 sterling) a week before losing all his/her benefits. There is no evidence available on how this impacts on poverty levels among lone parents in the Republic but lone parents' organisations there say that it makes it easier for lone parents to feed, clothe, educate and keep their children warm (OPEN, 2007). This is an area where the Northern Ireland Assembly could make a difference to the impact – if not the rate – of child poverty in NI. Because social security is a devolved matter, the Assembly could decide to set the earnings disregard at a higher level, say £60 a week, which would allow a parent to work up to ten hours a week and keep the additional income. This measure would be revenue neutral and so would not impact on the Barnett formula (the mechanism used by the UK Treasury to adjust automatically some elements of public expenditure in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to reflect decisions affecting other parts of the country). While the Treasury's Memorandum on Funding of the Devolved Administrations demands the maintenance of parity, there have been other revenue neutral departures from parity – for example, in New Deal regulations – without repercussions.

Childcare

Childcare provision plays a key role in the ability of women to take up and retain employment. Childcare in Northern Ireland is scarce and, apart from London, the most expensive in the UK. Gray and Carragher (2006) analysed data from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and revealed that the number of registered childminders and day care places in Northern Ireland equates to only one place for every 6.4 children under four in the region. Further, there are significant variations in provision between the east and the west of the region.

DHSSPS (2007) figures for 31 March 2007 show that western areas have less than half the number of nursery and childminder places per 1,000 children under 5 years as eastern areas. The availability of childcare places varies from 350 places per 1,000 children under five in Ards and North Down, to 130 places in Foyle, an area which includes Derry, Limavady and Strabane. That this variation is related not so much to geography as to deprivation is illustrated in Belfast city, where South and East Belfast has 330 places and the more deprived North and West Belfast has 190 per 1,000 children. These figures include all childcare places in the region, including those in women's and community centres, voluntary private and statutory provision.

Although the Sure Start initiative was introduced to Northern Ireland in 2000/01, funding for it has been significantly less than in other parts of the UK. For example, there was a commitment to the development of only two Children's Centres in NI within the UK Government's target of 2,500 Children's Centres to be in place by 2008. In the event, even those two Centres have not materialised. In 2008, just 30,000 children aged under the age of four and their families had access to the services provided through the programme in Northern Ireland.

In 2006, the Children and Young People Funding Package, announced by the Direct Rule Secretary of State, provided £13.25 million for Extended Schools and £3.85 million for early years. It supported an expansion of Sure Start, a Planned Development Programme for two-year-olds, and investment of approximately £0.65m to allow day care to be provided within Sure Start projects. In 2007/08 the Department of Education made £12 million available to Sure Start pending the publication of a new Early Years Strategy 'to bring together early years care and education in a co-ordinated way' (Department of Education for Northern Ireland, 2006). However, the Early Years Strategy has not yet been published. The UK Government actively began to support a policy of Extended Schools in 2002. The aim of the Extended Schools programme is to make schools

act as 'hubs for community services' by providing access to a range of activities and services linked to the development of children and young people. In England this includes childcare provision aimed at supporting parents to enter and remain in the labour market. Services made available under Extended Schools can include study support, 8am to 6pm wrap-around childcare in primary schools, health services, support for parents, adult learning and community activities.

The Extended Schools programme in Northern Ireland has not aimed to provide such wrap-around care, but since the funding has never been available to allow schools to seriously consider providing such services, it is hard to know whether some might be willing to do so. In England £1.3 billion has been made available for the period 2008–2011. A number of Extended School pilots were introduced in Northern Ireland as a result of the 2006 Children and Young People's Package. In 2008, however, the Minister for Education announced that "the outworking of the Budget 2007 process has meant that there has been a considerable reduction in the resources available for the Extended Schools programme." The programme was previously resourced through the Children & Young People Funding Package and the 2007/08 allocation was £10m. The funding currently available for Extended Schools is £5.826m. The Department of Education for Northern Ireland also introduced new, more stringent, eligibility criteria (DE, 2008).

Since 1998, £58 million has been invested in pre-school provision under the Department of Education's Pre-School Education Expansion Programme, creating 10,000 new pre-school education places. The almost universal uptake of the high quality, free nursery places offer for three- and four-year-olds[4] in NI supports proposals by Waldfogel and Garnham to extend the 'universal' element of childcare to younger ages and the idea from Kenway of a system of free, universal childcare.

In 1999, the Northern Ireland Childcare strategy was set out in *Children First* (DHSSPS, 1999). This envisaged an integrated approach to early childhood education and care in Northern Ireland, identifying three main challenges for childcare: variable quality, affordability and limited access. A review of this policy (DHSSPS, 2005) was critical of the lack of the progress and recommended a reshaping of the childcare vision for Northern Ireland, including the allocation of mainstream funding to the childcare strategy. There has been no progress since then on the childcare strategy. Northern Ireland has no equivalent of the 2006 Childcare Act. The Committee for Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister reporting on Child Poverty (OFMDFM, 2008), more recently identified the need to increase the level of good quality affordable childcare as part of the strategy to tackle child poverty.

Simmonds and Bivand's analysis of the Labour Force Survey found that a significant proportion of lone mothers left paid work in the summer months and re-entered employment in the autumn. This is clearly related to the summer school holidays. There is qualitative evidence from mothers in Northern Ireland to back up this finding. Indeed, given that summer school holidays in NI are three to four weeks longer than in Britain, it is likely to be even more difficult for mothers to reconcile employment with caring for children through the summer months. A more comprehensive, adequately funded Extended Schools programme that included summer schemes would help address childcare needs for primary school-age children, as well as the lack of social and leisure activities for this age group both after school and during school holidays. Extended Schools does not address the issue of care for teenagers, however.

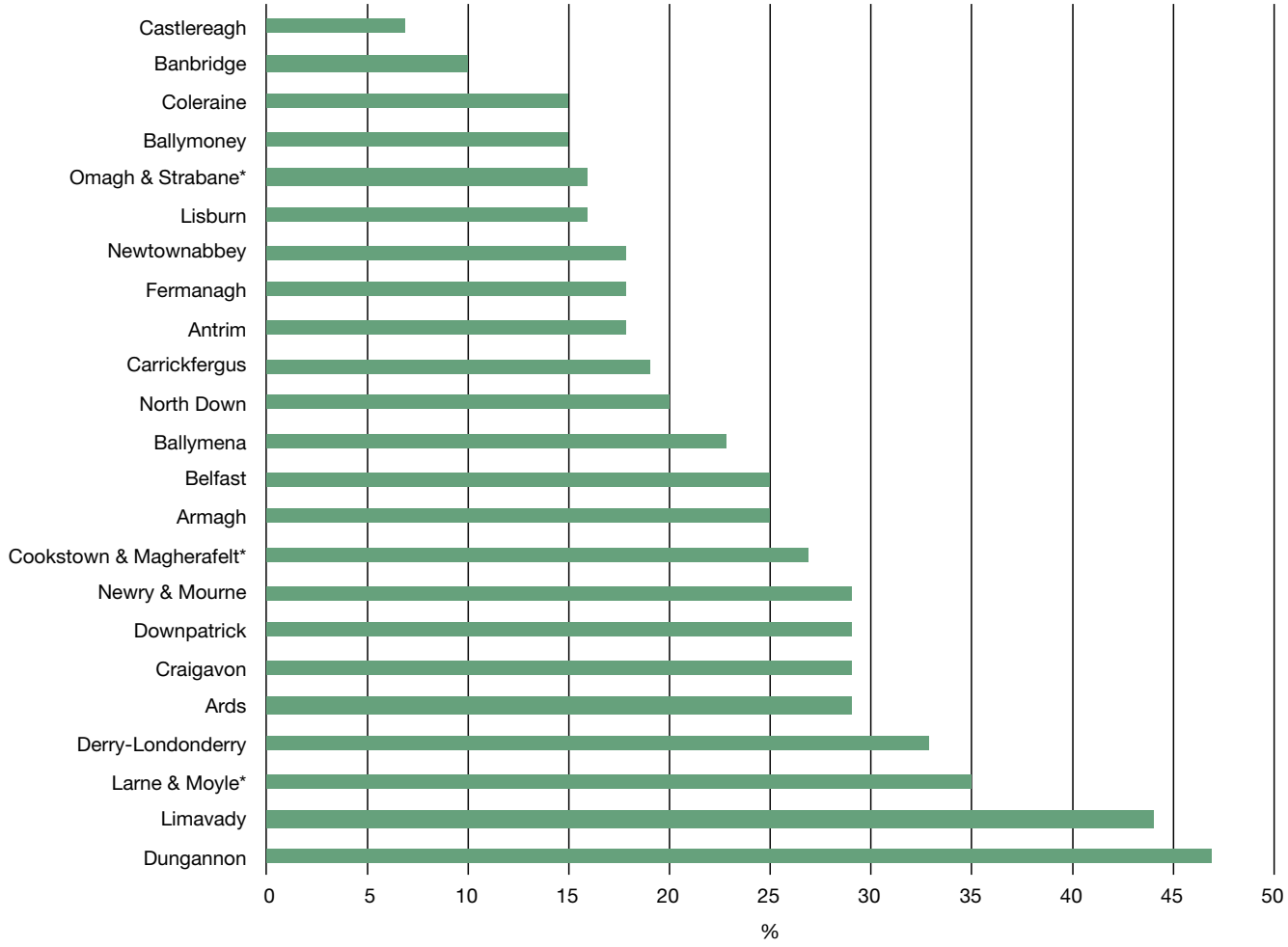
Worklessness, ill-health and the legacy of the conflict

Even before the recession, there were high rates of worklessness in parts of Northern Ireland. In terms of geography, jobs generally – and in particular well-paid jobs – tend to be concentrated in a 25–30 mile radius of Belfast. The Border areas, particularly those in the west of the region, have a working-age employment rate that is considerably lower than the average, as well as a Job Density Indicator[5] that indicates a scarcity of employment. Moyle and Strabane, for example, have only 49 jobs for every hundred people of working age; Cookstown has 63 and Derry-Londonderry, which is the region's second city, just 73 jobs for every hundred people of working age.

These low levels of available employment are reflected in high rates of child poverty between the Greater Belfast area and other parts of the region. As Figure 3 shows, 7 per cent of children in Castlereagh (east Belfast) live in child poverty, against 47 per cent in Dungannon, a border area.

Using any of a number of measures, Northern Ireland has inordinately high rates of mental ill-health, attributed generally to a combination of high rates of poverty and the impact of the conflict. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) estimates that prevalence figures for mental health problems in Northern Ireland are 25 per cent higher than in England.

Figure 3: Child poverty rates by district council area (three-year rolling average)



Source: DSD HBAI report/FRS 2004/5 to 2006/7

* Combined council areas due to small sample size

The number of people in Northern Ireland receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for mental health reasons in 2006 was 2.9 per cent of the total adult population. This is three times the comparable figure for GB (0.9 per cent) and has more than doubled since 1998, when 1.2 per cent of the total adult population received DLA for mental health reasons (Kenway *et al.*, 2006). Other evidence that suggests a growth in the extent of mental ill-health in Northern Ireland is the 33 per cent rise in the number of anti-depressant prescription items issued since 2000, to 1.4 million in 2005, equivalent to 0.75 prescription items per head (Hansard, 2006).

There is growing evidence that high levels of mental ill-health are significantly related to the conflict, including the psychological distress suffered by those who appeared resilient during the conflict. Variation in intensity of political violence between different areas of Northern Ireland has been linked to area differences in the level of psychological disorder (O'Reilly and Stevenson, 2003). People in poorer households were more likely to suffer significant health stresses and also more likely to have borne the brunt of 'the Troubles' (O'Reilly and Browne, 2001). Cairns (2005) reports that many people who were resilient during the conflict are now suffering psychological distress.

The international literature relating to the impact on health of trauma, violence and conflict on populations in developed countries is only starting to emerge. What there is, however, makes it clear that those at the bottom of society suffer most as a result of such trauma. For example, a study of depression in post-9/11 New York found that people living on low incomes in neighbourhoods characterised by an unequal income distribution had higher levels of depression than those living in neighbourhoods that were more homogenous in terms of income levels (Ahern and Galea, 2006).

In the former Yugoslavia, health care professionals have been keenly aware of the 'social trauma' caused by conflict; they have questioned the validity of simply treating victims of the conflict as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Rather, they argue, since such trauma is not inflicted in social isolation, the high levels of social distress that follow civil conflict need to be acknowledged and addressed as part of psycho-social healing. Clearly, the relatively brief but intense nature of the conflict in the countries of the former Yugoslavia makes it different from Northern Ireland. However, the fact that the conflict in Northern Ireland was 'normalised' and less intense over the decades does not detract from its impact.

While mental ill-health, like physical ill-health, varies in how it impacts on the ability to undertake paid work, the numbers receiving DLA for mental health reasons suggests that a significant proportion of the population is too ill to work because of mental illness and those who may be able to work, if suitably flexible jobs were available, will need support to do so. Further, although there has been some debate about the needs of the victims of the conflict, the victims are defined as individuals – those who lost a loved one, or were injured themselves. The level of *social* distress caused by the conflict and the impact it may have had on the wider community in those highly deprived areas where it was at its worst have not been addressed. Given the clear evidence that worklessness is highest in the areas where the conflict was at its worst, the relationship between these needs to be addressed by policy-makers and researchers. In particular, the interaction of poverty and conflict and its psychological consequences and how each exacerbates the other needs to be further explored (Hillyard *et al.*, 2005).

Growing up in poverty

The cost of child poverty to society is high, as demonstrated in *Estimating the costs of child poverty* (Hirsch, 2008a), which concluded that child poverty costs £25 billion each year in costs to the Exchequer and reduced GDP. But child poverty needs to be eradicated for a far more significant reason – because it devastates children's experience of the early years of their lives, robs them of years of healthy life in their later years and shapes the jobs they are likely to do, the control they are likely to have over most aspects of their lives and how far they can experience the level of comfort that is the norm in society throughout their adult lives. The corrosive effect that growing up in persistent poverty can have – in particular the evidence that such children are more likely to be suspended or excluded from school and be in trouble with the police – has added significance in a society emerging from conflict. The interaction of poverty with the legacy of the conflict makes it both more difficult to end high levels of worklessness and more acceptable to use violence, including violence for political ends, than in other parts of the UK and Ireland. This puts the most socially excluded young people at particular risk. That is why it is important to look at evidence about how poverty impacts on children in Northern Ireland in the second decade of peace.

Communities ravaged by poverty and conflict

The geography of poverty in Northern Ireland is striking; there is a marked concentration, with more than half of all children living in households in receipt of Income Support residing in 16 per cent of wards and more than three quarters living in 37 per cent of wards. The level of child poverty in some of those wards, particularly those in the north-west periphery of the region, is staggering, with over 80 per cent of children living in income poverty (McClelland, 2003).

The children living in these areas grow up in communities that experience the same interactive mixture of poverty, deprivation, poor health, including high levels of mental ill-health, low educational attainment and discrimination, as people living in the most disadvantaged parts of Scotland, England and Wales. In addition, however, they grow up in communities that are in deep social distress in the aftermath of the conflict. Generally, the most disadvantaged wards are in and around the areas most impacted by the conflict. In fact, a map of the areas where child poverty is most concentrated in Northern Ireland matches very closely the map of areas where the conflict has been most intense (Fay *et al.*, 1998). There is growing evidence that the interaction of conflict with poverty tends to exacerbate both (Hillyard *et al.*, 2005). While poverty does not cause conflict, the evidence both locally and internationally indicates that conflict feeds on poverty while undermining the

potential of those living in poverty to escape it. The history of the conflict has resulted in a high toleration of violence in Northern Ireland. It has also 'normalised' recourse to violence as a method of conflict resolution, demonstration of opposition to something, or drawing attention to grievances and injustices (perceived or felt). An uneasy relationship between disadvantaged young people and the police is not unusual in industrial societies. But the particular contested nature of policing in Northern Ireland has led to a level of hostility and suspicion between young people and the police, which adds to sectarian tension and disorder (Radford *et al.*, 2005; Hamilton *et al.*, 2003; Horgan, 2005; McAllister *et al.*, 2009)

Therefore, we need to be aware when talking about child poverty in Northern Ireland that it is overwhelmingly concentrated in those areas that were most affected by the conflict.

Education, poverty and employability

Young people growing up in poverty in Northern Ireland are not very different to young people elsewhere in the UK. If they get a good education and a job, they are less likely to live in poverty as adults, or to become involved in violence while young. As seen above, there are a high proportion of adults in NI who lack basic qualifications. Here, we examine what is happening with educational attainment among young people. While there was a marked improvement in qualification levels for a decade to the early 2000s, that improvement seems to have stalled. Indeed, the 2006 Northern Ireland Audit Office report, *Improving Literacy and Numeracy in Schools*, concluded that 'there has been only limited improvement among lower performing pupils in both primary and post-primary sectors'. The 2005 Literacy results for Key Stage 3 suggested that 6,000 14-year-olds in Northern Ireland were at risk of leaving school unable to read at the expected standard (Level 5).

Table 1 Qualifications of school leavers by FSM entitlement

Attainment	*Entitled to Free School Meals (%)*	*Not entitled to Free School Meals (%)*
5 A*-C GCSEs or higher (including A levels)	35.6	70.3
No formal qualifications	8.4	2.1

Source: NIAO (2006)

The qualifications of school leavers in Table 1 show that pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSMs) are considerably more likely to suffer educational disadvantage. They are only half as likely as other school leavers to have at least five or more GCSEs (A*-C) and are four times more likely to have no qualifications.

More than one in ten young people in Northern Ireland are not in education, employment or training (NEET). It has been hard to get a precise estimate of how many such young people there are but a series of Assembly debates and answers to written questions have produced some useful information. In a debate on 18 November 2008, the Minister for Employment and Learning said it is estimated that 15 per cent of all 16- to 24-year-olds in NI are not in education or training and 12 per cent of 16- to 18-year-olds are disengaged.

However, in response to a written question in February 2009, the Minister for Employment and Learning provided information which suggests that the situation is even worse than had been feared in November 2008 (see Table 2).

Table 2: Labour Force Survey estimates of 16- to 24-year-olds in Northern Ireland, who are not in employment, full-time education, or Government-supported training schemes*, 2006-08

Period	*Number*	*Per cent of all aged 16–24*
July–September 2006	40,000	17
July–September 2007	38,000	16
July–September 2008	45,000	19

* Figures exclude those in part-time education or training.

The Minister could not provide information on young people not in education, employment or training at Parliamentary Constituency level. However, we would expect that the majority of such young people would be found in the most disadvantaged areas of the region. This expectation is bolstered by analysis carried out in Scotland, comparing the proportions of young people not in education, employment or training in the top 15 per cent most deprived areas of the region with that in the rest of Scotland. Almost one in three (30 per cent) of 16- to 19-year-olds in the most deprived wards were NEET, compared with just 9 per cent in the rest of Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2005). Initiatives in Northern Ireland to 'narrow the gap' in inequalities in educational outcomes need to be more clearly focused, properly resourced and based on evidence of what works to keep young people engaged in education and training.

Lack of respect for children and young people

Children and young people disengage from education and training for a range of reasons. There is now a considerable amount of evidence that, for young people growing up in poverty, relationships with teachers and a perceived lack of respect from them impacts badly on their experience of school. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) Education and Poverty research revealed that children and young people growing up in poverty in Britain and Northern Ireland feel they are treated with disrespect by teachers (Horgan, 2007; Sutton *et al.*, 2007)

> I hate school, doing work and teachers shouting at me.
> (10-year-old boy, Horgan, 2007)

> Researcher: "Is life more unfair to some children than others?"
> Girl1: "Yes, it is. It is it's unfair for us because we have to just listen to teachers all the time."
>
> Researcher: "But isn't that the same for all children?"
>
> Girl 2: "No. It's not, because if you're rich you get to go to a posh school where the teachers probably teach you with respect."
> (Older estate girls in Sutton et al., 2007)

Data collected by the Young Life and Times Survey (an annual survey of 16-year-olds in Northern Ireland published by Schubotz *et al.*, 2008) shows that over two-thirds of respondents reported positive school experiences. However, 12 per cent of 16-year-olds did not feel happy at school, 16 per cent felt that most teachers did not respect them as an individual and 17 per cent felt they themselves had under-achieved. Young people from less well-off families reported significantly worse school experiences than those from well-off families. They were overall less happy at school, and were more likely to feel not respected as an individual by most teachers in their school.

The survey data reflects what young people living in the most disadvantaged parts of NI have told qualitative researchers. The teenagers talked about teachers "getting at" them and "picking on" them. The majority of young people did not regard this lack of respect as related to their families' poverty. Rather, they said this was due to being considered 'not any good' or not 'doing well' at their studies. However, given the correlation between deprivation and poor educational attainment, separating the two causes is difficult. Asked what they would like to see changed, most of the urban groups of young people included "stop the teachers picking on us" or "make the teachers show us some respect".

> Some of them [teachers] think they are better than you – they need to lighten up and stop having favourites.
> (Horgan, 2006)

A recently published study about why young people aged 16 and 17 are not in education, training or employment (NEET), carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research, found a range of reasons for young people's disengagement. However, it said that the NEET young people's experience of school was generally negative and that 'young people's experience of teachers, and the perceived lack of respect from teaching staff, impacted on their attitudes towards engaging in further learning' (NFER, 2009, p.60). The young people interviewed in the NFER study were frustrated with teaching and learning methods which they had found boring and not practical enough.

Young people in the most disadvantaged parts of Northern Ireland have also debated how relevant school is, especially to young people not of an academic bent. We know from cohort[6] studies that low-attaining and low-engaged young people coming towards the end of Key Stage 3 are highly critical of the relevance of the curriculum to their lives (Harland and Moor, 2001). The young people in both the qualitative and quantitative studies were also highly critical of teaching methods used. Harland and Moor (2001) noted that young people from schools with high levels of Free School Meals had started Key Stage 3 with great enthusiasm and had been far more likely than young people in schools with low levels of FSMs to say they enjoyed school. All the young people found school less enjoyable as they moved through the three years of KS3 but young people in schools with a high ratio of FSMs 'showed a greater decrease in enjoyment through Key Stage 3, suggesting disengagement could be a more deeply felt experience, particularly in the key areas of numeracy and literacy' (Harland and Moor, 2001, p.13).

The young people who participated in the qualitative research were all involved in youth clubs in the most deprived parts of NI. Among these young people, there was a widespread view that teachers needed to make learning more fun and the 'boring' teaching methods at school were contrasted unfavourably with the youth work methods of the informal education that many of them enjoyed. This was particularly true in relation to the young people who had been failed by the education system and who, at age 15 to 16, had literacy problems. These young people were most likely to say that "some teachers just don't teach" and leave the students floundering.

> Teachers should stop just handing down books instead of teaching; they need to explain things, not just tell us to read about it.

The success of Alternative Education Projects (AEPs) in re-engaging young people who have been suspended, expelled or dropped out of school is partly explained by the quality of relationships between staff and young people. For example, a DfES commissioned evaluation of AEPs found that the young people attending the projects evaluated 'highlighted positive staff-student relationships, being treated like adults, having a sense of equality with staff, being treated with respect and receiving more time and attention from staff' (Kendall *et al.*, 2003, p.137).

Of course, the lack of respect shown to young people by some teachers, is just one side of the story. Teachers' unions report growing levels of verbal abuse, and violence by pupils suffered by teachers in some schools (ATL, 2009). An Assembly debate on the issue, on 10 March 2009, heard that in 2006/07 there were 182 physical attacks on staff in post-primary schools, and 132 such attacks in 2007/08. In the same years, there were 66 and 54 attacks respectively in primary schools. However, while attacks on teachers get deserved headlines, the disrespect that some young people perceive teachers have for them, combined with a curriculum that they consider 'boring' leads some to disengage from school before they have achieved basic qualifications.

In developing policies to raise educational attainment, policy-makers need to take into account young people's views and strive to ensure that schools provide more opportunities for practical, relevant learning experiences and to promote more respectful relationships between teachers and students. Furthermore, there is growing evidence from qualitative research that poorer children and young people are worrying about money matters when their concerns should be only about their education (Ridge, 2009). Assembly policies should ensure, therefore, that school budgets can provide for all the costs of education – including books, school trips and after-school activities.

A second chance?

Among the young people who participated in the qualitative research, there was a high level of awareness that education was important in order to get on in life. Those who were about to do GCSEs, and some who were waiting for results, were fatalistic about their futures; they did not see the possibility of continuing their education if they expected not to do well. Some felt that confidence in their ability to learn gained through their involvement in informal education had come too late. Among young people in some of the groups, there was a palpable sense of dismay that they had messed their lives up by not working hard enough.

There was little consciousness of the possibility of trying again, repeating GCSEs or going on to A-levels in spite of poor GCSE results. When this possibility was raised, there was great enthusiasm for it. Some of the young people knew of schools that would allow students with poor GCSE results to take an extra year to catch up before going on to A-levels and thought this second chance should be available to all. Some talked about the Republic of Ireland's Transition Year programme, which has run for over 20 years. It encourages teenagers to take an extra year after its equivalent of GCSE exams to mature, catch up on areas they've fallen behind, do some independent study or volunteering work and so approach their final years in school with a more positive attitude (Jeffers, 2002; 2008).

The idea of providing a transition year, to give young people who had not been engaged with their education a second chance, is one that should be explored by policy-makers to help improve educational attainment among disadvantaged young people.

Social exclusion of children and young people

The JRF Education and Poverty research and other studies (Ridge, 2002; Ridge, 2006; Horgan 2006; Redmond, 2008) found that children and young people growing up in poverty face social exclusion at school because of stigma and their families' inability to meet the hidden costs of education or to afford out-of-school activities. Living in poverty means that children and young people cannot access leisure and social activities that others take for granted. Some activities, like the cinema, swimming etc. may be seen as luxuries but, in effect, these children are excluded from meeting friends outside of school because they cannot afford activities. As well as affecting their social lives, it can feed back into their feelings about being 'outsiders' at school. There is now a lot of evidence pointing to the need for cheaper provision of leisure facilities for young people. However, there is no equivalent in NI of *Youth Matters* or of the duty contained in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requiring local authorities to secure access for young people in their area to sufficient positive leisure-time activities. On the contrary, Northern Ireland Youth Services have suffered a series of cutbacks in funding over recent years, with an 8 per cent cut in its 2008/09 budget.

Recent research carried out for Save the Children found that the poorest children and young people in the most disadvantaged parts of Northern Ireland face social exclusion even within their own communities (Horgan, 2009). They are excluded not only from leisure services and commercial social activities but from friends' birthday parties and outings: *"You won't get taken to the beach or nothing."* The basis of this exclusion seems to lie in the inability of their families to reciprocate: they cannot afford to bring a 'decent' present to the birthday party nor to return hospitality.

> Child: [They can't] go to parties or go to the cinema.
> Researcher: Why wouldn't they go to parties? They don't have to pay to go like they do to go to the cinema.
> Child: Because they might not have enough money to buy a present for the kid and they might not have enough money to buy a car to take them there.
> (Nine-year-old girl, rural area)

The evidence of the social exclusion faced by some children and young people at school, and in terms of society's norms for children of their age, is concerning because it means they are in danger of disengaging from education and not enjoying their childhood. When a child is excluded, they can feel like an 'outsider', at school or in society generally. The fact that some young people are socially excluded even within the disadvantaged areas where they live is alarming, since it suggests there might be nowhere they do not feel an 'outsider'. Given that the areas in which these young people live are still feeling the impact of the conflict, and there are those wanting to continue the conflict, this is even more disquieting. There is a real danger that the level of exclusion faced by such young people makes them prey to those – drug dealers or paramilitaries – who offer to give them a role in the community. Just 1 per cent of young people who responded to the 2008 Young Life and Times Survey had felt pressurised to join a paramilitary organisation even though they did not want to. However, 1 per cent of a representative sample of all young people who celebrated their 16th birthday in February and March 2007 is not inconsiderable. Three out of four of the pressurised young people felt pressure from other young people – 38 per cent from friends, another 38 per cent by peers who were not friends.

Forthcoming research (McAllister *et al.*, 2009) indicates that violence was and continues to be a part of life in these communities. In their research, young people spoke of instances where powerful individuals, claiming links to paramilitary groups, were getting children and young people to take up their agenda and how children were encouraged to take part in riots and sectarian actions. The researchers stated that the focus was often on the anti-social and violent behaviours of children and young people and the wider social and cultural context is lost. This is a powerful reason why we need to take child poverty, and the social exclusion of children and young people growing up in poverty, seriously if we are not to create the circumstances for another generation of young people to involve themselves in violence for political ends.

What can the Northern Ireland Assembly do to address child poverty?

In examining what can be done to tackle child poverty in Northern Ireland, we have focused on the issues over which the devolved administration has some influence. For example, we have not made a case for increasing benefit levels, although there is clear evidence that benefits are not adequate to allow claimants 'to lead life with dignity and to participate in society as full members' (European Commission, 2002). This is because, although social security is devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Treasury insists on parity in relation to social security matters. In this section, based on the preceding discussion, we will look at what the Assembly *can* do to tackle the level and effects of child poverty in the region and to try to meet its target of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

Increase the supply of well-paid, good quality jobs

Clearly, work is not an automatic route out of poverty. Cutting in-work poverty is essential to move more working families out of poverty and to make employment more attractive to those on benefits. The Assembly can insist that Invest Northern Ireland cease promoting the region as a low-pay economy. Given the link between market wage and levels of child poverty in industrialised countries (Bradbury and Jäntti, 1999; UNICEF, 2005; DeFina, 2008), the Government needs to work with employers to encourage a change of attitudes to the quality of employment available – including wage levels, flexible working for parents and progression for employees (see Hirsch, 2008b).

Support those already in work to increase their qualification levels

The poor quality of jobs available at the lower end of the labour market must be addressed. The region needs jobs which offer training and progression. At present, those who are in low-paid jobs are least likely to obtain training. Again, the Government needs to work with employers to encourage them to facilitate employee training opportunities, working with employers and parents to develop skills and qualifications to help them out of the no pay-low pay cycle.

Alleviate the worst impacts of poverty on children

The Assembly has already shown that it is possible to intervene to alleviate some of the worst aspects of poverty without causing problems about parity. Just as it provided the one-off fuel payment of £150 to families on benefit in winter 2008/09, it could introduce a higher 'disregard' on earnings for 'mini-jobs', thus allowing those living on benefits to provide a little extra for their families. Additionally, school budgets need to provide for all the costs of education, including books, school trips and after-school activities.

Address the lack of quality affordable childcare

The scarcity and high cost of childcare in Northern Ireland clearly makes it more difficult for parents to engage in paid employment. There are a number of ways in which the Assembly could address this: increase the provision of subsidised childcare to make it affordable to all;

- extend the hours provided under the offer to all three- and four-year-olds of a nursery place;
- bring two-year-olds into that offer;
- expand SureStart childcare provision to 20 hours a week; and
- commit to providing a children's centre in every community, as is proposed in England.

Investment in childcare will bring a range of benefits. It will provide local jobs; training of more childcare workers will enhance qualifications and can provide a first step to a job with better career prospects. Investment in childcare across NI and particularly in the west will create jobs in the short term and in longer term improve the labour market participation of women.

Revisiting the implementation of the Extended Schools initiative in Northern Ireland could also be beneficial. In particular, ensuring this policy reaches its potential with full wrap-around services and schools working more closely with local communities will help address childcare problems for primary school children and tackle the lack of provision for this age group after school and during the summer holidays, thus improving the employment potential of mothers.

Increase educational attainment

As suggested in the discussion of young people's views, there is a clear need for more Alternative Education Programmes, particularly in the most disadvantaged parts of the region. The Department of Education (NI) should look at how to promote the development of teaching methods and relationships that will engage disadvantaged young people and help to improve their educational attainment. Part of that process might include exploring the provision of a 'second chance' for young people at risk of poor educational attainment, such as the Transition Year which has worked well in the Republic of Ireland.

Provide access to leisure and social activities for poorer young people

The Executive needs to develop a Youth Action Plan, linked to the Children and Young People's Strategy and the Lifetime Opportunities (Anti-Poverty) Strategy. That plan should include greatly increased investment in youth services, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas, to provide young people with positive role models within their communities. It must also address ways of giving poorer young people access to positive social and leisure activities.

Conclusion

The goal of eradicating child poverty is a major challenge in Northern Ireland. We hope that the evidence provided here helps to shed light on some of the reasons why that challenge must be met if Northern Ireland is to become a more developed, prosperous and peaceful region by 2020. The extent of the social exclusion of some children and young people growing up in persistent poverty in Northern Ireland today must be addressed. The Assembly needs to use all its devolved powers to work to ensure that such children and young people are allowed to feel part of this society.

References

Ahern, J. and Galea, S. (2006) 'Social context and depression after a disaster: the role of income inequality', in *J Epidemiol Community Health* 60, pp. 766–770

Ajdukovic, D. (2004) 'Social Contexts of Trauma and Healing', in *Medicine, Conflict And Survival*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 120–135

ATL (2009) 'Violent pupils and parents make teachers' lives a misery, according to ATL'. http://www.atl.org.uk/media-office/media-archive/violence-against-teachers.asp

Barnes, M, Connolly, A. and Tomaszewski, W. (2008) *The circumstances of persistently poor families with children: Evidence from the Families and Children Study (FACS)*. London: DWP Research Report No 487

Bell, K., Brewer, M. and Philips, D. (2007) *Lone Parents and 'Mini jobs'*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Bivand, P. (2005) *Rising Workless Households Threatens Child Poverty Aim*. CESI Working Brief 167, London

Bradbury, B. & Jäntti, M. (1999) *Child Poverty Across Industrialised Nations,* Innocenti Occasional Papers, Economic and Social Policy Studies, No. 71. Florence: UNICEF International Child Development Centre

Cairns, E. and Wilson, R. (1993) 'Stress, Coping and Political Violence in Northern Ireland', in Wilson, J.P. and Raphael, B. (Eds) *International handbook of traumatic stress syndromes*. New York: Plenum press

Cairns, E. (2005) 'Coping with political violence: lessons from Northern Ireland', http://news.ulster.ac.uk/releases/2005/1941.html

DeFina, R.H. (2008) 'The Impact of State Minimum Wages on Child Poverty in Female-Headed Families', *Journal of Poverty,* Vol. 12 (2), pp. 155–174

Department of Education for Northern Ireland (2008) *Extended Schools Criteria and Funding.* Belfast: DE

Department of Regional Development (2007) *Northern Ireland Transport Statistics*. Belfast: DRD

Department of Regional Development (2008) *Northern Ireland Transport Statistics*. Belfast: DRD

Department of Social Development (2009) *Client Group Analysis*. Belfast: DSD

DHSSPS (1999) *Children First: The Northern Ireland Childcare Strategy.* Belfast: DHSS in Association with the Training and Employment Agency and DENI

DHSSPS (2005) *Review of Children First, Final Report.* Belfast: Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety

DHSSPS NI (2007) *Children Order Statistical Bulletin*. Belfast: DHSSPS NI

DETINI (2007) *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings*

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2008) *Every Child an Equal Child, An Equality Commission Statement on Key Inequalities in Education and a Strategy for Intervention*. Belfast: ECNI

Eurostat (2005) 'Inwork Poverty', *Statistics in Focus*, 5/2005

Fay, M.T., Morrissey, M. and Smyth, M. (1998) *Mapping Troubles-Related Deaths and Deprivation in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: INCORE/CTS

Gray, A.M. and Carragher, L. (2006) *Possibilities: The Views of Lone Parents on Childcare in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Gingerbread

Hales, J., Tipping, S. and Lyon, N. (2007) *Mothers' participation in paid work: the role of 'mini-jobs'*. DWP Research Report No. 467. London: Department for Work and Pensions

Hamilton J., Radford, K. and Jarman, N. (2003) *Policing, Accountability and Young People*. Belfast: Institute for Conflict Research

Hansard (2006) Answer to Parliamentary Question, 2 May 2006: Column 1478W

Harland, J. and Moor, H. (2001) 'Experiencing the Curriculum: The Learner's Perspective – An Overview Of The Findings From The Northern Ireland Curriculum Cohort Study: Key Stage 3 Phase'. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Conference, University of Leeds, 13–15 September 2001

Hayes, B. and McAllister, I. (2005) 'Public Support for Political Violence and Paramilitarism in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 17, pp. 1–19

Hillyard, P., Kelly, G., McLaughlin, E., Patsios, D. and Tomlinson, M. (2003) *Bare Necessities: Poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: OFMDFM/Democratic Dialogue

Hillyard, P., Rolston, W. and Tomlinson, M. (2005) *Poverty and Conflict: the international evidence*. Dublin: CPA/IPA
Hillyard, P. and Patsios, D. (2009) *Child Poverty and Differential Rates of Household Inflation.* Belfast: OFMDFM NI

Hirsch, D. (2008a) *Estimating the costs of child poverty*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Hirsch, D. (2008b) *What is needed to end child poverty*? York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Horgan, G. (2005) *The Particular Circumstances of Children in Northern Ireland.* Belfast: Children's Law Centre

Horgan, G. (2006) *Young people's aspirations and mothers reconciling lives inside and outside the home*. Derry: Bogside and Brandywell Women's Group

Horgan, G. (2007) *The impact of poverty on young children's experience of school.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Horgan, G. (2009) *Speaking out against poverty: the views and experiences of children and young people in deprived areas of Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Save the Children

Iakovou, M. and Berthoud, R. (2000) *Parents and employment : an analysis of low income families in the British household panel survey.* Leeds: Corporate Document Services

Jarman, N. (2005) *No Longer A Problem? Sectarian Violence in Northern Ireland.* Belfast: OFMDFM/ICCR

Jeffers, G. (2002) 'Transition Year And Educational Disadvantage' in *Irish Educational Studies,* Vol. 21 (2) Autumn 2002, pp.47–62

Jeffers, G. (2008) *Innovation and Resistance in Irish Schooling: the case of transition year*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Limerick. Available to download at http://eprints.nuim.ie/1227/

Kendall, S., Kinder, K., Halsey, K., Fletcher-Morgan, C., White, R. and Brown, C. (2003) *An Evaluation of Alternative Education Initiatives.* London: DfES Research Report RR403

Kenway, P., MacInnes, T., Kelly, A. and Palmer, G. (2006) *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Northern Ireland*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Liddell, C. (2008) *The Impact of Fuel Poverty on Children*. Belfast: Save the Children

Lupton, R., (2004) 'Schools in disadvantaged areas: recognising context and raising quality'. CASE paper, 76. London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics and Political Science

Machin, S. and McNally, S. (2006) *Education and Poverty: A literature review*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

McAllister, S., Scraton, P. and Haydon, D. (2009, forthcoming) *Childhood in Transition: Experiencing Marginalisation and Conflict in Northern Ireland.* Belfast: Queen's University Belfast/Prince's Trust/Save the Children

McClelland, A. (2003) *Gini Coefficient Analyse*s. Belfast: NISRA

McIntosh, S. (2004) *The impact of vocational qualifications on the labour market outcomes of low-achieving school-leavers*. London: Centre for Economic Performance, Discussion Paper No. 621

Millar, J. (2008) 'Making Work Pay, Making Tax Credits Work: An Assessment with specific Reference to Lone Parent Employment'. *International Social Security Review*, 61(2) 21–38

Monteith, M., Lloyd, K. and McKee, P. (2008a) *Key Findings: Persistent Child Poverty in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Queen's University Belfast, Save the Children, Belfast

Monteith, M., Lloyd, K. and McKee, P. (2008b) *Persistent Child Poverty in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Queen's University Belfast, Save the Children, Belfast

NFER (2009) *Increasing Participation: Understanding Young People who do not Participate in Education or Training at 16 and 17.* Research Report RR072. London: DCSF

Northern Ireland Audit Office (2006) *Improving Literacy and Numeracy in Schools.* Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, HC 953, Session 2005–2006

OFMDFM Committee (2008) *Report on Inquiry into Child Poverty in Northern Ireland*. Report 07/07/08R, NI Assembly

OPEN (2007) 'OPEN's Pre-Budget Submission', in *B–Open Magazine,* Dublin

O'Reilly, D. and Browne, S. (2001) *Health and Health Service Use in Northern Ireland: Social Variations*. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

O'Reilly, D. and Stevenson, M. (2003) 'Mental health in Northern Ireland: have 'the Troubles' made it worse?', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, Vol. 57, No. 7, pp. 488–92

Prescription Cost Analysis Central Services Agency and mid-year estimates of population. Northern Ireland statistics and Research Agency, 2000–2005

Radford, K., Hamilton, J., and Jarman, N. (2005) '"It's their word against mine": Young People's Attitudes to the Police Complaints Procedure in Northern Ireland', in *Children and Society,* Vol. 19 (2005) pp. 360–370

Redmond, G. (2008) 'Children's Perspectives on Economic Adversity: A Review of the Literature', *Innocenti Research Centre Discussion Paper No. IDP 2008–01*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

Ridge, T. (2002) *Childhood Poverty and Social Exclusion: From a child's perspectiv*e. Policy Press: Bristol

Ridge, T. (2006) 'Childhood Poverty: a barrier to participation and social inclusion', in David, J., Tisdall, K., Prout, A. and Hill, M. (Eds) *Children, Young People and Social Inclusion: Participation for what?* Policy Press: Bristol

Ridge, T. (2009) *Living with Poverty: A review of the literature on children's and families' experiences of poverty.* DWP Research Report 594

Schubotz, D. *et al.* (2008) *Results of Young Life and Times Survey for 2007. See* www.ark.ac.uk/ylt

Scottish Executive (2005) *Literature Review of the NEET Group.* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research

Sutton, L., Smith,N., Dearden,C. and Middleton, S. (2007) *A child's-eye view of social difference.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

UNICEF (2005) 'Child Poverty in Rich Countries, 2005', *Innocenti Report Card* No. 6. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

Yeandle, S. (2009) (Ed.) *Policy for a Change: Local labour market analysis and gender equality.* Bristol: Policy Press

Endnotes

1 The qualitative information comes from:
- The 2004/05 study *Young people's aspirations and mothers reconciling lives inside and outside the home*, commissioned by the Bogside/ Brandywell Women's Group, funded by the Big Lottery Fund (Horgan, 2006). For methodology and final report, see www.freederry.org/bbwg;
- *The impact of poverty on young children's experience of school*, part of JRF's Education and Poverty programme; and
- From *Speaking out against poverty: the views and experiences of children and young people in deprived areas of Northern Ireland*, which reports on research carried out in 2007/08 for Save the Children, Belfast.

2 All figures for wage and poverty levels in Scotland, England (including English regions), Wales and Northern Ireland are based on UK averages, not averages for the particular country or region.

3 See http://www.investni.com/index/locate/why_northern_ireland/competitive_costs.htm

4 Most four-year-olds in Northern Ireland have started formal education; the compulsory school starting age is four.

5 The Jobs Density Indicator is an indicator of demand for labour; it is defined as the total jobs in an area divided by the resident working-age population.

6 A group of young people born in the same year or period is referred to as a 'cohort'.

Published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Homestead, 40 Water End, York YO30 6WP. This project is part of the JRF's research and development programme. These views, however, are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Foundation. ISSN 0958-3084